

AN EPISTLE.

SALT LAKE CITY, JAN. 25TH, 1888.

To the Quorums of Seventies,

DEAR BRETHREN.

We are pleased to again have the opportunity of addressing you by epistle and of making some few suggestions which may not be inappropriate to the organizations among which we have the honor to labor.

The manner of conducting Theological Classes should, we think, receive the careful attention of all connected therewith. In the organization of these classes it is not necessary to embrace an entire Quorum in a class, but there may be as many organized as circumstances may require. It is desired that each President and member should be punctual in attending his class meeting. High Priests and Elders may, by invitation from the President, attend these classes. A roll and record should be kept by each class separate from the general Quorum record.

The object of these classes should be the instruction of its members in the science of Theology, the proper development

of all truth and the preparation of the Seventies to preach the gospel; and while a thorough acquaintance with the fundamental principles of our religion should here be received, the acquisition of knowledge concerning other matters ought not to be neglected. In fact, every source of useful information should be opened for the benefit of the Elders in this Church, in order that they may combat error upon scientific as well as religious grounds. We do not, however, approve of debates or discussions among the brethren of these classes, because any good that may be thus gained is more than counterbalanced in the unpleasant feelings which it is possible to create. Moreover, we think it very improper to have any of the brethren assume false positions such as those taken by opponents of the gospel, even though the object sought is to exhibit their false doctrines. We are of the opinion that the same object may be attained without compelling the brethren to argue from premises which they know to be incorrect.

We think it of the utmost importance that the Presidents of the various Quorums meet together from time to time to consult about the methods of conducting meetings, the subjects to be considered and other matters of importance. In this way an interchange of ideas can be had and the best adopted; thus avoiding the direction by one President of all the Quorum affairs according to his personal notion, without regard to the opinions and feelings of his brethren who hold equal authority with him.

No effort should be spared to get all careless and indifferent members to attend their meetings, as this is the only way in which the Quorum can be kept in a healthy and sound condition. Every Seventy should also feel it his duty to be in attendance at the Stake Conferences, Priesthood and

Ward meetings, and thus manifest by his presence the interest he feels in the work of God. The Stake and Ward authorities, too, should receive the cordial support and ready assistance of the members of these Quorums; and, in fact, in every good work these brethren should be the most active, willing and persevering workers.

In regard to filling up Quorums: where vacancies occur, it is the duty of the Presidents in consultation with their Bishops to make selections; but no President can be ordained without some of the Twelve Apostles or one or more of this Council being present; neither can a member be ordained, except by their direct authority, or by instructions from them so to do.

Every Quorum should have a contingent fund into which each member may pay whatever amount he feels his circumstances will justify. The means thus obtained should be disbursed as the Quorum may direct. This fund should be separate from the general fund, into which it is expected each member will pay 50 cents annually. We are pleased to state that a few of the Quorums have responded to our call for means to pay the general expenses, while others have either paid nothing or have only remitted a portion of the amount allotted to each Quorum. As our expenses are continuous we trust the Quorums will be prompt in forwarding to us their annual dues.

We regret very much to say that some Quorums have exhibited an indifference or carelessness in regard to our communications which is unworthy of them. Notwithstanding our efforts to obtain complete genealogical lists, answers to questions and other desirable and necessary information, our wishes have been either unheeded, or have met with such

unsatisfactory responses as to be of very little service to us. Some Quorums have shown a promptness and accuracy which are very commendable, and we hope that all will see the necessity of promptly and correctly answering all inquiries of this Council.

At our Seventies' Conferences which have been held in some of the Stakes we have had very encouraging reports and have rejoiced exceedingly in the spirit manifested. We hope to soon extend our labors so as to afford the brethren in each Stake of Zion the opportunity of thus meeting together, so that ideas may be exchanged and the best methods be found of conducting meetings and promoting the welfare of the Quorums.

We will be pleased to receive communications at any time from the brethren, and any information it is in our power to impart, will be gladly given. Hoping that prosperity may be continued to the Saints and that God's blessings may attend the labors of all His servants.

We remain your brethren in the gospel,

H. S. ELDREDGE,

In behalf of the First Seven Presidents of the Seventies.

P. S.—All letters as heretofore will be addressed to Robert Campbell, 344 E. South Temple Street, Salt Lake City.